Hadith: Leave me as I leave you. Verily, what destroyed those before you was their asking questions and their disagreement with their prophets

Category: The Creed . Belief in the Messengers . Pre-Islamic Prophets and Messengers, peace be upon them .

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رضي الله عنه عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ:
«دَعُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُكُمْ، إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِسُؤَالِهِمْ وَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ، فَإِذَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ، وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِأَمْرٍ فَأْتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ».
[صحيح] - [متفق عليه] - [صحيح البخاري: 7288]

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said:
"Leave me as I leave you. Verily, what destroyed those before you was their asking questions and their disagreement with their prophets. So, if I forbid you from something, avoid it; and if I command you with something, do as much of it as you can."
[Authentic] - [Agreed upon] - [Sahīh Al-Bukhāri - 7288]

Explanation

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) mentioned that the Shariah rulings fall into three categories: what is left unaddressed, prohibitions, and commands.
As for the first: It is what the Shariah has left unaddressed, as there is no ruling, and things, in principle, are not obligatory. During the Prophet's lifetime, it was a must not to ask about something that had not occurred for fear that it might become obligatory or forbidden through revelation, as Allah has left it unaddressed out of mercy towards His slaves. After the Prophet's death, on the other hand, if the question is posed by way of seeking legal opinion or learning about what one needs of the religion, then it is not only permissible but also commanded. However, if the question is posed by way of obstinacy and affectation, then this kind of question should be avoided, and this is what the Hadīth refers to, as it could lead to what happened to the Children of

Israel when they were commanded to slaughter a cow. It was sufficient for them to obey the command by slaughtering any cow; however, when they acted obstinately, things were made hard for them.

Second: The prohibitions: It is whatever one is rewarded for abandoning and is punished for doing. So, all prohibitions must be avoided.

Third: The commands: It is whatever one is rewarded for doing and punished for abandoning. The commands must be carried out to the best of one's ability.

Benefits from the Hadith

1. **People should be occupied with what is important and necessary, leaving what is not immediately needed, and they should not be preoccupied with asking about what has not occurred.**
2. **It is prohibited to ask questions that may lead to the complexity of issues and open the door to suspicious matters that lead to wide divergence.**
3. **Commanding that all prohibitions be avoided because avoiding them entails no hardship, and this is why the prohibition here is general.**
4. **Commanding that orders be carried out according to the ability, as it could entail hardship or one could be unable to do it. Hence, the command here depends on the ability.**
5. **Forbidding the act of asking too many questions. Scholars divided questions into two categories: First: Questions that are meant for learning what one needs of the religion, and this kind of question is required, and an example of this is the Companions' questions. Second: Questions that are asked by way of obstinacy and affectation, and this is the kind of forbidden question.**
6. **Warning this Ummah of disobeying their Prophet as what occurred in the previous nations.**
7. **Asking frequently about what is not necessary and disagreeing with the prophets lead to destruction, especially when the questions are about what is unattainable, like matters of the unseen, which none knows except Allah, and the events taking place on the Day of Judgment.**
8. **Forbidding the act of asking about extremely difficult matters. Al-Awzāʻi said: When Allah chooses to deprive His slave of the blessing of knowledge, He makes him speak fallacies, for I noted that those were the least among people in terms of knowledge. Ibn Wahb said: I heard Mālik say: Arguing about knowledge turns off the light of knowledge in one's heart.**

Categories

- The Creed . Belief in the Messengers . Pre-Islamic Prophets and Messengers, peace be upon them
- Jurisprudence and Juristic Principles . Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence . Significations and Inference

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